

REMARKS

Applicant appreciates the thorough examination the present application and responds with the amendments above and the remarks that follow.

The Office Action includes the request that applicant correct the minor errors in the specification of which she is aware. As shown above, applicant amends the specification to address informalities.

Claims 1-7 and 20-27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by *Wical* (U.S. Patent No. 5,940,821). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Claim 1 describes an associating information management system that has:

retrieval processing means for performing retrieval processing of various types of information from parent to child and from child to parent by association of the relationship management table in the information and the scope as designated.

Claims 2-7 depend from claim 1, so they also describe an associating information management system with such retrieval processing means.

Claim 20 describes an associating information management system that has:

retrieval processing means for performing retrieval processing for association based on the relationship stored in said relationship vector table, direction of said relationship and position time series information, and for performing output processing of the relationship map.

Claims 21-27 depend from claim 20, so they also describe an associating information management system with such retrieval processing means.

Applicant respectfully submits that *Wical* does not teach an associating information management system that has retrieval processing means as specifically (even if implicitly, as explained next) described in the claims. Applicant acknowledges the citation in the Office

Action of learning processing 165 in Fig. 1; col. 31, lines 26-51; and Fig. 13 (and associated texts). However, the cited subject matter does not anticipate the claimed retrieval processing means for the following reason:

Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, sixth paragraph, the retrieval processing means, which is expressed as a means for performing a specified function without the recital of structure or acts thereof, must be construed to cover the corresponding structure and acts described in the specification (and their equivalents). The specification discusses retrieval processing, *e.g.*, beginning on page 30 at line 23, and represents how retrieval processing unit 4 interacts with other elements of the associating information management system in Fig. 5. Thus, this corresponding structure/acts are implicitly part of the claimed subject matter.

Wical does not teach such retrieval processing means. Instead, the *Wical* system creates content to search documents. "Document theme vectors identify the content of documents through themes as well as through classification of the documents in categories that reflects what the documents are primarily about." (Abstract.) Such processing is unnecessary in applicant's claimed invention, because, in contrast to the *Wical* system, the claimed invention can be applied to relationships that are not in the form of documents. See, *e.g.*, the paragraph bridging pages 25 and 26 of applicant's specification, which shows that relationships of documents are only one type of all the relationships manageable by the claimed invention.

Because *Wical* does not teach a retrieval processing means as described in any of the rejected claims, applicant requests that the anticipation rejection be withdrawn.

In a separate matter, applicant notes that the Office Action does not indicate review of the Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) filed April 17, 2002. Accordingly, applicant requests that the next communication from the Examiner provide such acknowledgement.

In view of the remarks above, applicant now submits that the application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, a Notice of Allowability is hereby requested. If for any reason it is believed that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is welcome to contact applicant's undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to discuss resolution of the remaining issues.

If this paper is not timely filed, applicant petitions for an extension of time. The fee for the extension, and any other fees that may be due, may be debited from Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosure: Petition for extension of time

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